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THREADS of MOSS

By

WALTER L. SCOTT



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By

WALTER L. SCOTT

Editor of

“*Recollections of Thomas Jefferson Barton, M.D.*”

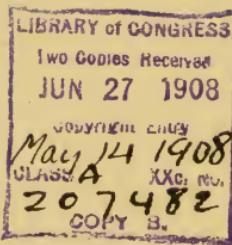
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Author of “Perseus” in Rhyme



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Modesto, N.Y.

*To those young friends
whose instruction has been my pleasure
this little volume is inscribed
by the author*

NOTE

This little volume could have of itself, perhaps,
no great vitality.

As its name implies, "Threads of Moss" lives
chiefly by clinging to the giant oaks of literature.

WALTER L. SCOTT,
Tivoli, N. Y.

1908

INTRODUCTION

The poet, 'ere his muse begins,
Like harper tries each sounding string,
Till each in sweeter concord rings,
'Ere to the dainty throng he sings.

Or marksman tests his pliant bow,
His shaft cut from the copses low,
Essays the string and proves them so
To meet his rival archer foe.

Or warrior knight, the fleetest steed
That ever scarred the yielding mead,
And so, perchance, for greater deed,
Are horse and rider well agreed.

Or boatman proves his bark and oar,
Skims the white crests that lave the shore,
Glides the deep furrow, and all before
He rides the mightier waters o'er.

Not so the author; all combine,
The unsophisticated line,
Discords perhaps without design—
Blame not the bard but mend the rhyme.

THREADS OF MOSS

THE NEW YEAR

Heigh ho, for the jolly, bold, bonny New Year!
He is riding full speed but will he get here?
Oh, will he get here in time to reign in his stead,
Ere his dying ancestor lies speechless and
dead?

The Old Year is dying. The merry Old Year!
We'll let a tear, tender, fall soft on his bier,
While we watch for the rider o'er mountain and
mead,
As he gallops this way on his snowy white steed.

The Old Year is dying; alas, he is dead!
(Ten thousand worse fellows than he have been
sped.)

Now a ring in the steeple, a shout at the gate,
Tell the New Year is here and he rode not too
late.

Then ho, for the jolly, bold, bonny young heir!
He gets the whole kingdom but do not despair,
We will share all he gets or we'll share at least
part,
For there's peace on his forehead and love at
his heart.

OUR HEROES

WRITTEN FOR DECORATION DAY

Oh, remember our heroes, those brave warriors
of ours,
And wreath for them roses and garlands of
flowers ;
Let affection press gently each mound of the
brave
As they slumber in peace the long years in
their grave ;
For these soldiers shall sleep 'till the bugle's
last cry
Bids them wake and march forth to their tents
in the sky ;
Then blest be our heroes when the brief night is
through,
And Jehovah shall call them for final review.

We'll remember those heroes, those warriors
who sleep
In their tombs in the sea in the vales of the
deep ;

They fell on those decks that they bathed with
their blood,
Then sank to their rest in the vaults of the
flood;
There no myrtle may twine nor the ivy vines
thread,
But the love in our hearts reaches down to the
dead.
Dream on gallant warriors (this song is for
thee)
'Till thy Captain shall summon thee forth from
the sea!

Oh, remember those warriors who lie where they
fell,
When the shock of the conflict rent mountain
and dell,
And the chief and his charger, the soldier and gun,
Went down in the fray, but the battle was won !
And an angel of glory bent low o'er the sward,
And enrolled them that day 'mong the hosts of
the Lord.
Then remember our heroes, those warriors of
ours,
And wreathè for them roses and garlands of
flowers.

O VALENTINE

O Valentine, the day is thine, the fourteenth
day of Feb.,
When missives hie and tokens fly and winter's
on the ebb,
When robins swing upon the wing with
thoughts of northern heather,
And hearts o'erflow despite the snow and much
inclement weather,
Then lovely girls with golden curls and maids
with darker glory
Write things so sweet 'twere indiscreet to here
relate the story.

O Valentine, the day is thine, this fourteenth
day foresaid,
When Cupid gay has things to say would turn
the fairest head,
And when the Muse, think as we choose, fills up
each thought with honey,
And webs are spun and hearts are won without
the aid of money,
Then gallant men assume the pen to improvise
a sonnet,
And thus address the loveliness enveloped in a
bonnet.

THE RIVER HUDSON

Flow on, O River, to the sea,
Thy grandeur is the token
That more and more thy waves shall pour
Through centuries yet unspoken.

Flow on among thy lovely vales
And thy majestic mountains ;
From all thy hills thy silver rills
Shall be thy endless fountains.

Flow on, and though a thousand ships
Are on thy bosom freighted,
Yet not by thee shall bark ere be
To shipwreck ever fated.

Flow on, O River, to the sea,
Thou hast no peer in splendor ;
Here by thy side my home shall bide,
And here my song I render.

THE DAINTY MAIDEN

(Lines suggested by the inundated condition of the street upon which the author then lived, March, 1897.)

It chanced upon a certain night,
While wading up Wall Street,
I saw a dainty, dainty maid
All loath to wet her feet.

Close by the watery brink she stood,
Demurely looking down,
“If I wade in this slushy gulf
I’ll surely, surely drown.”

Soaked to a lamping post I clung,
My heart a-welling o'er—
“Oh, would I were a ferry boat,
Or else a bachelor.”

And then that dainty, dainty maid
Essayed her tiny shoe;
The water got the best of it—
“Would I were water too.”

'Twas such a dainty, dainty maid;—
To make her once more try,
The pondling downed his muddy look,
He had her in his eye.

"O, what a dainty, dainty maid!"
The water chuckled out;
"Here comes a youthful denizen,
We'll see what he's about."

Close to the lamping post I clung,
—That post and I were one—
"If this were but the Delaware
I'd cross like Washington."

But now the youthful denizen
Has reached the miry scene;
"Just put your confidence in me
And on my elbow lean."

And so the two they waded in,
The dampness deeper grew;
"If I walk up to my chin," she cried,
"I'll not be blaming you."

Oh, such a dainty, dainty maid
To walk the wetness through!
Her confidence had shrunken some
As had her tiny shoe.

And as they sank the deeper in,
She would no more be led,
He to the great occasion rose,
And placed her on his head.

'Twas then I quit the lamping post,
And struck out for the shore,
With great regret that 'twas not I
That maid to safety bore.

TO “T. O. M.”

(IN SELF DEFENSE.)

To thee, my unknown bard, I'll own the freak,
My delirium, that prompted thy critique;
The light effusions of my heedless soul
Usurped my wonted self and took control;
Loosed Fun and Mirth, which we too often
bind,—

And freed the gayer dictates of my mind.
The Attic salt, to which I'd ne'er been bred,
Mingling with my blood, leaped into my head;
And Nymphs and Naiads, we so lightly deem,
Winged the corpuscles of that flying stream—
For this, my hapless verse, I'm made to feel,
Though slightly wounded, thy Damascus
steel,—

Yet when I view the scars so deftly made,
I know no god of war e'er forged thy blade.

Again, my critic bard, and captious friend,
Whose T. O. M. I've labored much to ken,
Who broke my hyperboles upon thy *wheel,
And made much doubt my simple similies yield,

To you for pardon, prithee, must I sue,
If 'long this theme a few quaint quibs I strew?
For when upon that image you declaim,
—The “maid” upon the “head” of “den’zen”
 lain—

You quite o’erlooked the depth the water grew;
For had he held the maid the way that your
 suggestion charms,
The public paragraph had read, “she drowned
 within his arms!”

And now, bright bard, or ere I close this strain,
Permit me yet one figure to disclaim;—
The Elf!—Ha, ha! that statement I’ll condone;
But “portly self’s” to much for me to own!
“Soaked!” Well, water out of place ’tis best
 to loath:—
In this the “god of wine” will Bacchus both.

*Wheel of torture.

SAUGERTIES LITERARY CLUB

(Pertaining to the Saugerties, N. Y., Literary Club,
1881-1886, of which the author was a member.)

PART 1.

Of every Club there has been sung
Its praises by some dulcet tongue;
With rarest words new coined or old,
The tales of Clubland have been told.

Then let me from seclusion raise,
And hold my Club to loving gaze,
And pray the Muse to help indite
The truthful story that I write.

Yet ere my lab'ring pen would tell,
And keep the rhyme and meter well,
About these themes these authors wrote,
Make not a slip and not a misquote,
Indulge me yet a rhyme or two,
Before these subjects I pursue,
And let me, pray, in truth disclose
Just how, I vow, it all arose
I failed Part Second to compose.

The best time, so the Muses say,
To improvise a truthful lay,
Is from twelve to six a. m.,
And hence to practice on this plan,
I waited till the village tower
Proclaimed that night the midnight hour,
I waited till each lusty bird
Was satisfied he had been heard,
Or some belated youngster ran,
Or hurried some bewildered man,
The first to home and slumbers sound,
The second also homeward bound,
But not, alas, to slumbers sweet
I'm told, but I will not repeat;
Suffice it that all quiet grew,
So I serenely might pursue
My stock of rhymes that I must write,
Ere speeds the balance of the night.

This I determined then and wrote:
'Twas when keen Winter's piercing note,
Out the cold storage of his throat,
Goose-quilled the epidermis coat,
When Jove—'Twas here a score or more
Of raps assailed my outside door,

And broke at once the poet's thread
Of fancy, and compelled instead,
The op'ning of his window wide,
To view the pressing throng outside;
Here had converged (and now's the rub),
Each lord and lady of the Club.
They had convened in '86,
Beside the Hudson, not the Styx.

And what a sight the poet meets,—
Four score of forms where once was street!
One hundred thousand sheets, or less,
Of snugly written MSS.,
Were waved with gloved or mitten hand,
(The air was very rare, for lo,
Pale mercury, below zero,
Congealed like milk and ceased to flow!)
To make the poet understand
That each was an inspired sheet
And must, ere does the night turn grey,
Be all embodied in his lay.

I knew the metal of the Club,
The circle I might rightly dub
The rival universal Hub,
And this of course I also knew

They'd stand right there till frozen blue,
And if I yet consented not
To take the whole consummate lot
Of manuscripts upon the spot,
They'd clang and clatter at my door,
Till death released me or a thaw!
So I consented (how like men!)
And once again resumed my pen,
Wrote on till six o'clock came 'round,
(If poets write in slumbers sound,)
And this, ah well! was what I found.

PART 2.

I.

The god of all the gods, great Jove, alone,
Sat sternly turning, high upon his throne,
The pages vast of his celestial tome.
'Twas here he found, as he was wont of yore,
The wearying subjects he had conned before,—
The wisdom introduced from gallant Gaul,
The erudition taken from Pall Mall,
The wit from Greece and ancient Rome and all
The speech delivered once in Fanueil Hall;
All this and more, Jove could no longer brook,
Such relics of the past, submerged the book.

II.

Surfeited with the records he partook,
The king abruptly shut the fated book,
And high Olympus at the impact shook!
Then leaning o'er the far extending land,
With all the might that gods alone command,
He hurled (and now his greatest strength ap-
plies ;)

O'er earth and sea the journal of the skies.
The pond'rous pages loos'ning in their fall,
Spread wide their ruined records over all
The region vast from Egypt unto Gaul,
And sinking in the soil each leaf there sticks.
The origin of man, the seer predicts,
Will be traced, through these hieroglyphics,
In the year forty hundred ninety-six.

III.

Great Jove then to the god of wisdom said:
“The cyclopedias of these realms I've read,
And find that every bilious theme but fills
Each god and goddess with dyspeptic ills;
The whole celestial race is turning yellow,
From what they've been compelled to swallow.

Speed to the earth and search the world abroad,
Secure the choicest wit the earth affords,
Ambrosial food to feed these famished gods.
Somewhere a Literary Club you'll find,
Of which 'tis said there's nothing like its kind.
On Attic Salt the members daily feed,
And honey of Hymettus as they need.
Pursue my quest of these rare writers learn,
Impatient Jove awaits thy swift return."

IV.

Then to the earth the willing goddess flies,
And Jove once more ascends the loftiest skies,
Where 'round the throne the gods attend in
crowds,
The king who wields the science of the clouds.
Many a goddess too is in the train,
Who join the waiting throng around the fane.
Bacchus alone is let to move about,
To exercise and limber up his gout!

V.

Meanwhile Minerva spreads each golden wing,
And as she soars her silver sandals ring;

Through every city of the eastern sun,
She flies to which her shining sandals run ;
Through endless towns she drives her ceaseless
wing,
So swift the flight her silver slippers sing.
No Club is found that holds sufficient store,
To yet attract this airy voyager,
Till bold and blue the classic Catskills rise.
“Here lies the town !” the happy goddess cries,
And on her quest no more herself applies,
But furls her snowy sails in Saugerties !

VI.

Now what it was 'tis never plainly clear,
And so receives no explanation here ;)
That made the songster dream that 'ventful
night,
(All poets have a visionary flight ;)
And hence write not what he had meant to
write.
The sacred sheets the Club had left behind,
With silken threads Minerva's fingers bind,
And then she sails (to join the upper crowds)
The pearly pathway leading through the clouds.

Apollo rising lays aside his bow,
(The first to break the unremitting row,)
Receives the beaming goddess with a nod,
And hands her to a seat by father god,
Who, eager to peruse the brilliant thoughts,
That just have reached the precincts of his
courts,
Plucks a meteor from the passing sky,
And holds it near his secretary's eye.

VII.

Jove said, "Dear Pallas, while the flaming beam
I hold, you read the Club, creme de la creme."
Then Pallas, rising, read both loud and clear,
That all the heavens crowded 'round might hear
Each subject of the Club de Saugerties
That once spellbound the earth but now the
skies.

Delighted with the learning which he drew,
Before were read three-fourths the subjects
through,
Jove massed the hundred thousand sheets or
less,
And sent them all to the Olympic press.

EPILOGUE.

Pleased with the feast of reason they partook,
All wished but not a god his seat forsook,
'Till each had left an order for a book.
The classic circuit, at a nod from Jove,
Disjoins the Senate and abruptly rose,
Then to their different routes themselves apply,
Reach in a thought the stars to which they fly,
Set in the suburbs of the dusky sky.
And as the bee returns again to sup,
And fill with sweets his oft depleted cup,
So shall each god who feels his wiśdom wane,
Return to sip the dulcet themes again.
Fresh from the press this tome shall entertain,
And like the cruise of oil feel not the drain.

BABY MIRIAM

(THE AUTHOR'S DAUGHTER.)

It was winter.—

A soft white mantle gently lay,
Lo, Earth had robed herself that day!
And skies were all with love aglow,
And earth was one exquisite snow,
When baby Miriam came.

It was winter.—

With smile that only angels know,
And purer than the spotless snow,
With founts of blue in sweetest eyes,
E'er kindled in the upper skies,
Baby Miriam came.

It was spring.—

Lovely Miriam's graces grew;
The pretty flowers likewise too;
This lily, like the flowers sprung,
That yield best joys when life is young,
Was baby Miriam.

It was summer.—

Then by her cherub brow 'twas known,
Too much of Heaven to earth had flown.
Lovely Miriam did not die!
Her soul went back, 'twas her reply
To Heaven.

THOMAS JEFFERSON BARTON, M. D.

(A man of great intellectual power, a critic, poet, and
a physician of superior ability.)

A giant in God's vast eternal plan;
Among his fellow men a gifted man,
Whose fearless spirit, wise, free and bold could,
When his just judgment moved him to the mood,
Arraign the bad and recommend the good.
To whom all pretence and vain display,
The pomp of self and pride and such as they,
That chill the heart and lead the mind astray,
Were less than naught,—sad shadows of a day!

Though to great minds his fancy chiefly turned,
Yet no degrees of human kind he spurned;
A scholar in the school of Learning's best,
A man of wit yet could descend to jest;
He knew the artificial from the true,
And reverenced most what Nature spread to
view.

A prince among the *noble* of his art,
He left to earth, like them, not only part,
But all the worth and wisdom of his heart.

AGE AND YOUTH

Much wisdom doth old age
With all the years accrue;
Age is perhaps but youth
Though in another hue.

Age is the constant stream
That broadens to the sea;
Youth is the babbling brook,
A possibility.

PHEBE'S PROBLEM

Sweet Phebe knows not which to take—
Jack has her love and so has Jake;
So nicely balanced runs the tale,
A feather's weight might turn the scale.

Long has dear Phebe held in store,
And much the matter pondered o'er:
The sweet conundrum, by resolve,
She's promised Jake and Jack to solve.

By no light tokens will she bide,
That help some maidens to decide—
As clover leaf above the door,
Or pulling of the longest straw.

Oh, no, this much bewitching lass
Lets such delusive omens pass.
“I'll seek,” quoth she, “some violet bed
And thence determine which I'll wed.”

And so, with heart and mind content,
And on both Jack and Jacob bent,

She finds the little buds of blue,
And, bending down, picks off just two.

“I’ll name this Jack and call this Jake;
If Jake should lose, then Jack I’ll take;
If Jacob wins, why Jack I lose.
Oh, what a lovely way to choose!”

Then hooks, as she has often done,
The buds together, just for fun;
But now in earnest, and, anon,
She’ll take the one whose head stays on.

Then, closing both her pretty eyes,
Sweet Phebe pulls. To her surprise,
In scarce one little second’s beat,
Both heads lie severed at her feet!

MORAL:

The obvious moral herein seen is this:
A fickle mind is often much remiss;
Our aims and actions subdivided lose
The very object we had sought to choose;
And, like this captious maiden, fail to win
Just naught except what may be termed
chagrin.

PRELUDE TO PORTIA

(Lines read by the author, Feb. 24, 1903, Tivoli, N. Y.)

Of all the things that gods or men
Demand of us below,
Worst is to ask some dreadful task,
Our dullness can not do.

When mighty Jove, who owns great realms
Of glist'ning real estate,
Lets on his hand a vast amount
Of dust accumulate,
And wants that dust and much that's rust
All strictly cleared away
He calls John Hercules, P. D.,
The best man of his day.

And so when Time would send at once,,
A message on the run,
He picks no stumbling dunce to break
The record to the sun ;
Or if a billet doux that's meant
Alone for Hebe's eye,

And must be sent with full intent
To get a sealed reply,
The wary Cupid sends a god,
No goddess need apply!

When we poor men are racked with pain
That quacks nor mint can't reach,
Our trouble hies for Doctor Wise,
Who plies the cup and leech.
And if he finds the case won't yield,
To treatments we don't know,
He slyly leaves a bottle marked
Good old Elixir Pro!

But if we'd prove that seven tints
Produce one spot of white,
The proof on wing would quickly bring
The school teachers in sight;
Or if we wished to jam four squares
In two circles' spaces,
Translate aut insanit homo
Aut facit versus,
The thing they'd do and look us all
Calmly in our faces.

But should this vital Eastern Star
Ere feel the critic's knife,
And if the quill, ah me, should kill,
To bring it back to life,
We wouldn't call the doctor in,
We'd call the doctor's wife!*

When wise Minerva wanted 'roused
The music of the lute,
She asked no Pan nor Vu-l-can†
To drum a sweet salute,
But wisely chose;—Appolo 'rose
The master of the flute.
And when a lady wishes wrote
Some literary chaff,
She asks a bard who never sings
Such wondrous things by half.

*The Worthy Matron was the doctor's wife.

†Vulcan.

PORTIA

(Written at the request of Mrs. C. A. Pritchard, the Worthy Matron of Portia Chapter, No. 235, O. E. S., and read by the author, on the occasion of a "Shakespearean Evening," held in Monumental Lodge rooms, Madalin, N. Y., February 24, 1903.)

I.

Hail to Portia, the Eastern Star address'd,
Immortal star by Shakespeare's wit express'd,
Queen of the Muse and empress of my song,
To whom each thought and simple line belong!

II.

Who is this Portia? And whose was the hand
That brought this vision forth from Colchos
strand?
By what nice dreams was princely Shakespeare
swayed
When first he brought to light this Venice maid?
Breath of a bard his spirit gave her life
And made the world with living Portia rife!

III.

The drama's Juno, whose bewitching self
Outshines for love the grasping greed for pelf;
Whose graces the ungracious mind regrets,
And all those charms outnumb'ring Juliet's.
Ten thousand suitors for *her* smiles repine,
Ten thousand suitors *win* a Rosaline.

IV.

What tale is this rehearsed about this queen?
The half is told, the other half not seen,
And if beheld the first would seem so small,
That what is said would seem not said at all.

V.

This then is what sweet Portia most would
teach:
The act is fair, 'tis better than the speech;
The human breast where lies the conscience
dead,
Resembles gold much weighted down with lead;

One fearless truth that 'scapes the schemer's
mesh,
Though light as air outweighs one pound of
flesh;
That noble organ misconstrued the head,
Too often follows where the heart has fled;
Yet not, forsooth, would I condemn the man
Whose heart is soft, let those but try who can;
'Tis far much better that his head aloft
Should be a little hard than over soft.

VI.

The changing scene ennobles Portia's part;
She is not counseled only by the heart,
Nor will she from her sire's mandates stray;
And this act points a moral in the play:—
That first we love our selfish selves the most,
And may be pardoned much when least we boast.
Then there is gold, like King Midas, we'd gain,
If only clouds would send it down like rain,
That all might on the yellow nectar sup,
Till every heart beat in a golden cup.
Let's not too much a grasping Shylock scoff,
There are some folks had cut just double off!

VII.

The ardent youth, who feels his forehead grow,
'Till half his skull from wisdom is aglow,
Removes the path that once his mother's pride
Was wont to trace with love on either side,
And early learns 'twould be no gentle trait,
To part it in the middle of his pate,
And thus to mark the balance of his brain,
That both the sides might bear an equal strain,
And so remove beyond the slightest doubt,
The chance to grow onesided from without

VIII.

Nor less, perhaps, (than when our mother's
heart,
Straight o'er our brows, drew back the golden
part,
And smoothed, with tender touch, the silken
threads,
That formed, with what good Nature richly
spreads,
The yellow crown upon our boyish heads,) We spurn the lines of this our earlier date,
When others have no 'surance to be straight,

And build in modern stature and erect,
Achieving naught; (on which we may reflect.)
Sweet Portia's lost; but reck we not of that,
A butterfly is caught with empty hat!

IX.

But Portia is a woman just and true;
And I could paint such noble women too,
The fairest creatures to this kingdom lent,
Were this the time and such my theme's intent;
Or, did I care to lengthen out this scroll,
Another picture might I now unroll,
To prove the adage good, though worn and old,
That much, alas, that glitters is not gold.
But here my cautious pen shall not be lent
To sketch what soon the poet might repent.
My mind still to my youthful ideal clings,
I ne'er could paint a woman without wings.

X.

There are so many moods that might be writ,
If herein only more would wisely fit;
And yet the writer quotes but Portia's will,
And what is wrote is written with her quill.

Sweet Portia's self, and here lies least acclaim,
'Twas not herself alone they sought to gain;—
When knightly lords and princely courtiers
came,
Each to the *gold* or *silver* casket sped,
And shunned the one that they mistook for lead.
Thus are we by much glitter (more's the shame)
Induced to play the self-same-act again.
Spurn not the duller clay for there alone
Perchance may lie an angel 'neath the stone!

XI.

There is so much distracts the heart and mind,
We're in the play ere half we are inclined;
Once on the stage we're helpless to withdraw;
We act all parts and sigh there are no more.

VILLAGE GIRL AND TRINITY CHURCH BELL

(Lines suggested by the indefinite closing of the church
to which the author belonged.)

VILLAGE GIRL:

Tell, oh tell me, dear old bell,
O thou belfried sentinel,
Why thy tones no longer swell.
If thou hear'st me, dearest bell,
Tell, oh tell me what befell,
Why thy tones no longer swell,
Dear old belfried sentinel.

TRINITY BELL:

Yes, oh yes, I hear thee plead,
Little, dear, would be the need
If again my voice were freed ;
Over mountains, stream and mead
Let, oh let the tidings speed
That it never was decreed
That my voice should ne'er be freed.

VILLAGE GIRL:

Tell, oh tell me, dear old friend,
O thou pride of Christian men,
What thy silence doth portend .
Wilt thou ring and ring again,
O thou tried and faithful friend?
Surely this is not the end
That thy silence doth portend!

TRINITY BELL:

Rest, dear girl, thy anxious soul,
Reigns Jehovah as of old;
Out upon the wood and wold,
God shall let my music roll;
Roll, sweet music, clear and bold!
Fret not then, dear anxious soul,
Reigns Jehovah as of old.



BABY BOY'S VOYAGE

Baby boy, ship ahoy,
All the sails a-flying,
Skies are blue, gallant crew,
Soon he's on the voyage.

Steady keel, ship of steel,
All the sun a-shining,
Light the swell, fare thee well,
Now he's on the voyage.

Fair the breeze, 'cross the seas,
Safe the ship's a-sailing,
Balmy air everywhere
On the bonny voyage.

Brave the ship makes the trip,—
Now she is returning,
Staunch and true 'cross the blue,
Homeward on the voyage.



Ship ahoy, baby boy,
All the bells a-ringing,
Safe in port, love's the thought
Makes the golden voyage.

A GLIMPSE OF THE ADVENT OF MICHAEL ANGELO

Long, long since the days of Chaucer had
poetry been mute,
And Learning old no longer bore the choicest
of her fruit ;
The brilliant sun must set or ere the day again
is born,
The dying trunk enrich the soil from which
new treelets form.

Just as from out the hanging clouds the won-
drous rainbow grew,
Thus the modern learning broke o'er the mod-
ern earth anew ;
The greatest of his time had come (the greatest
that we know)
When latter Rome gave to the world great
Michael Angelo.

It was in the marble statue the Grecian's creed
was said,
It was in an antique statue the "Marble Faun"
was read,
But 'twas in the uncouth marble in dust and
grimness prone,
The master sculptor always saw an angel in the
stone.

THE GIFT OF SILENCE

Of all the gifts the gods had at command,
The rarest one, bestowed on erring man,
Was Silence; and unless unduly much,
The gods made no mistake in granting such.

Wisest of gifts, for how much good is wrought
When speech is mute and silence sways the
thought!

Discreet is he and very circumspect
Who holds, at least, each hasty thought in
check.

THE MAN WHO KNOWS

The man who knows, when at his rattling rate,
Does often keep the credulous crowd a-gape;
His wealth is words and when this all is used,
He'll borrow more to keep the crowd amused.

The man who knows knew all things from the start,
And labors loud his knowledge to impart;
But if the opposite turns out instead,
He's shouting volumes of "Twas what I said!"

This man is sure of how it all befell;
If wrong, he adds that you may go—ah, well,
He's not so over choice about each word,
The chiefest thing to him is to be heard.

L'ENVOR.

Thus ever is it with the man
Whose over-loaded skull
Beguiles him into thinking
That he more than knows the "hull."

Whose bump of gumption is his tongue,
So constant on the jump,
And flows a stream when e'er you place
Your hands upon the pump.

AN UNAVOIDABLE PROCRASTINATION

OR

The Tardy Bridegroom, Tivoli

With congratulations to the Rev. Father Dooly, the author of "Let's Marry Them," upon his clever plan and happy poetical solution of the question, "Is it Madalin or Tivoli?"

The plan is good. Salute the bard who knows
So well the way to reconcile our woes!
Right to the point his shafts impelled for good,
True as the feathered darts of Robin Hood.
He trims his arrows bright, and when they're
pruned,
His shafts are sped to warn but not to wound.
Love shapes his wands and Duty bends the bow,
And if his missiles hit he shares the blow.

But first a dire apology is due,
Before the groom's dilemma I pursue:
(Will Wordsworth, when he'd studied out his
plan,
Took nineteen years to polish up his man,

Poor Peter Bell. To tell of his disaster,
For nineteen years mixed donkey and the mas-
ter!

Then why not this dull pen, whose blunted edge
Is better meant to form a woodman's wedge,
Than decorate a man in one short week,
To grace a nuptial he did not seek?)

One week ago, poor man, now doomed to wed,
Had been on hand, but he was sick in bed.
The truth is this (murder will always out,)
The helpless man was laid up with the gout,
And owned, when quizzed, he'd been a little
risky,
And added too much water to his whisky.

Now that was vile! To think that I did use
That dreadful word to help along this muse!
It was bad taste. I should have stopped to
think,
And used a term that would have rhymed with
drink.

But be that as it may, the doctors came,
And in a jiffy diagnosed the pain:

"He's sound of mind and surely sound of lung,
The root of this disease must be his tongue."
Now that was wise; for let us all remember,
The seat of most complaints lies in this member.

From foot to head they plied each pungent art,
But somehow could not find the patient's heart.
"There's something else besides his being lame,
That ails this man. Now let us try again."
They used the probe and pounded in each test,
Yet could not find his heart within his chest.
While all the while the man declaimed of
hades,—
(We'll spare the words and not affront the
ladies.)

Aghast the doctors stood: "What shall we do?
He'll have to have a heart to pull him through."
Then Cupid sped—he is a wily lad,
And soon returned to make the doctors glad.

"Good Sirs," he said, "I think I've found the
Miss.
His gout be hanged! The case is simply this:
Fair Madalin, who is the same sweet belle,
A lass, that sometimes fares us ill or well,

The same dear girl that she most always is,
Has sent *her* heart to take the place of *his*."

"That's just the thing!" the doctors cried,
"and *you*

May give it out that *we* have pulled him
through."

A sounder man, perhaps a little tart,
But just the sort to hold a damsel's heart.

Sweet Madalin—but no, I'll not attempt
To dress the *lady* up for this event;
It takes a poet's pen, a poet's soul,
To play so fine a part in such a role.
The *man* has been presented in the plot;
A better hand than mine must tie the knot.

THERE IS NO MIDDLE GROUND

There is no middle ground. So shape them as
we will,
Our lives, at best or worst, stand but for good
or ill.

There is no middle ground. *This* is the
righteous plan:—
Our just accountability to God and man.

Think not that we may find some sweet, re-
morseless spot,
Where Right lies prone and dead, and Justice
liveth not.

Where graceless thoughts exclude all graceful
deeds of love,
And get for such as those indulgence from
above.

Think not that we may find some earthly
bourn unshriven,
Whereon descendeth not the dread decrees of
Heaven.

Mayhap there is a road that through the distance leads,
Where faiths to shadows grow and men alas,
to weeds.—

But no, there is no middle ground; and this
the test—
We have, for having lived, the world but
wronged or blest!

Beguiled with false ideals, deluded to the last,
We gaze in *self-appraisement* o'er our vacant past.

Let's not our years so end with such excuses made—
“Here is, O Judge, thy talent in this napkin laid.”

Learn of each thread of grass that *upward* as it springs,
Of *life* and not of *death* each tiny tendril sings.

MUSIC

Oh sweet, immortal music
That never shall expire,
We hear thee in the laughing brook,
The grasses and the lyre,
And where a million chords are strung
Among the joyful trees,
We hear the notes the breezes make
Among the singing leaves.

JUN 27 1908

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